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ABSTRACT

Videotape recordings and transcriptions of sequences of drama sessions in 10 elementary classrooms were analyzed to explore the utility of an anthropological perspective in assessing the nature of children's participation in improvisational drama project activities. Approximately 270 children and their teachers received seven and one half hours of drama sessions over a period of eight weeks in their individual classrooms. Analysis of the videotaped materials revealed four variables that had an impact on the project as it unfolded: children's cognitive and social developmental level; regional social-cultural context; the culture of the school as manifest in the classroom; and the teacher's role in the project. It was found that children needed a knowledge from which to draw on and the necessary social competencies required to actualize that knowledge to participate in drama in a meaningful way. The aspect of the regional and working class culture that was most apparent was the traditional definition of sex roles, that is, male dominance and female passivity. The instructional system and peer social codes were often observed as constraints to behavior. Finally, the role of the teacher was seen as critical, for without meaningful teacher participation, little was accomplished. (Excerpts of the transcripts of classroom sessions are included.) (HOD)

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DRAMA AS A CATALYST FOR ESTABLISHING NEW
MODES OF CLASSROOM INTERACTION: AN
ANTHROPOLOGIST'S ASSESSMENT

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ABSTRACT

DRAMA AS A CATALYST FOR ESTABLISHING NEW MODES OF CLASSROOM INTERACTION: AN ANTHROPOLOGIST'S ASSESSMENT

Jeanette S. Myers and Theodora J. St. Lawrence

From videotape records and transcriptions of sequences of drama sessions, the classroom ethnographer delineates factors which impacted on the sessions and the achievement of the drama objectives. The explicit objective was to enrich oral language teaching and improve interpersonal skills by modeling teacher behavior. The implicit objective was to establish new modes of classroom interaction. Anecdotal material illustrates the impact of four key variables:

- (1) Children's cognitive and social developmental level. A match of teacher expectation and children's social and developmental level is crucial. Also noted are the apparently developmentally related capacity to sustain imaginative playing and to maintain and elaborate upon characterization over time.
- (2) The regional-cultural context. Utilization of the raw material of the culture in the sessions heightened children's confidence and responsiveness. A significant aspect of the impact of context is the consistent culturally determined acting out of male/female roles.
- (3) The culture of the school as manifest in the classroom. The institutional system and peer social codes frequently impacted in unforeseen and highly significant ways on the sessions.
- (4) The teacher's role in the drama sessions.

Three male teachers with similar professional and social/cultural backgrounds demonstrated a continuum of participation ranging from no involvement to total participation. Without meaningful teacher participation, little can be accomplished. Variables (1) and (3) cannot be changed but will undermine the work if ignored. Variables (2) and (4) can be worked with to improve the success of the sessions.

DRAMA AS A CATALYST FOR ESTABLISHING
NEW MODES OF CLASSROOM INTERACTION:
AN ANTHROPOLOGISTS ASSESSMENT

The drama-in-education project on which this study is based came about as a result of a grant to provide drama experiences for a school population that otherwise would not have been exposed to this art form. The project director (referred to in the study as the team leader), Jeanette Myers, also sought to offer an opportunity for field experience to university students enrolled in her creative drama classes.

Description of the Project

The populations of the schools chosen to participate in the project were characterized as disadvantaged by virtue of rural isolation. Two schools in two different communities took part in the project. Ten classes including approximately 270 children and their teachers received seven and one half hours of drama sessions over a period of eight weeks in their individual classrooms. Two third grade classes, three fourth grade classes, one fifth, three sixth and one seventh grade participated.

The communities were similar in that they are rural, static or declining economically with no larger employer. In bad economic times as many as 60 to 70% of the families are on some form of public assistance. One fourth of the student body was certified for Title I reading programs and eighteen percent of the students for Speech Correction. Fifty percent qualify for the free lunch program.

The teachers were invited to designate the curricular

skills and/or affective areas to which the drama sessions could be most appropriately related. These areas were social studies curriculum, oral language skills, and in the affective domain. self-confidence, self-concept, attitude toward learning, and inter-personal skills.

Oral language skills relationships with drama were similar for all the classes. The concerns described here were common to all the classes. A particular problem area is the impact of the dialect spoken in the areas on language skills development in school. For example, younger children commonly have difficulty recognizing the congruence of the home language with the "standard" dialect/speech of the teachers. Syntactic/grammatical deviations from "standard" English which are common in the children of the area (which may be as much socio-economic as regional) are difficult to correct. Dialect and common grammatical problems in the speech are believed by the school staff to be the cause of much of the deficiency in reading ability that manifests itself from grade one onward.

Further, many of the children are language development delayed. Characteristically, according to the teachers, the children have not been encouraged to verbalize at home, particularly in the higher cognitive thinking areas, and have markedly limited vocabulary. The culture, according to the teachers, places constraints on independent thinking and problem solving. As a consequence, the children are reticent in school situations requiring verbalization and probably in writing as well.

An Analysis of Video-Tape Materials Generated as
a Record of an Improvisational Drama Project
Conducted in Two Rural Appalachian Public
Elementary Schools in the Winter and
Spring of 1981

The analysis contained in this report was commissioned to explore the utility of an anthropological perspective in assessing the nature of children's participation in improvisational drama project activities. The assumption that this type of analysis could be of value is based upon the worth of anthropological interpretation demonstrated in an ever growing number of studies to be found in the anthropological and educational research literatures.¹ Such studies have proven to be particularly useful for providing insight into the nature and dynamics of children's classroom social behaviors.² The project itself was concerned with the use of improvisational drama as a vehicle to establish new modes of adult-child and child-child interaction. It also required the children to draw upon the social and cultural knowledge they command regarding the classroom and their communities to participate in project dramatic activities.

Methodology

The author had only minimal involvement with the project as it was conducted. A list of questions which would generate useful supplementary materials (to the video-taped classroom sessions) was prepared to assist the project team in interviewing teachers. The author had no other role in the design of the

project, or in its execution. Therefore, the analysis presented here is based upon secondary materials over which the writer had minimal influence. While the video tapes are particularly rich, they in no way capture the totality of the behavior occurring in the classroom at the time they were recorded. Equally important is that they focus primarily on the activities of the project personnel or the dramatic activities being conducted by and/or with children; they do not record all the other behaviors an on-site ethnographic researcher would also have found of importance. Nevertheless, they are sufficient for the task set out above in the author's opinion.

It would not be possible to make such an analysis without prior first-hand field experience in a public school with children of the same ages. Such prior research is needed to understand the limits of the secondary materials. It is also needed in order to understand all the kinds of behaviors and activities that characterize classrooms on a day-to-day basis. It is further important to understand that the public school is an institution. It is characterized by commonalities of form, function, activity, and behavior wherever it is found. The author's own field work was done in an inner-city school with children ages nine through twelve years.³ The contrasts in the two settings (urban field work as opposed to rural project analysis) and in the children's ethnic affiliations (Black as opposed to Appalachian White) assisted in analyzing certain kinds of classroom behaviors. Social class appeared to be comparable,

working class to lower class primarily in both settings, which facilitated analysis as well.

The video-tapes processed, i.e., transcribed, included all the tapes available for the fifth, sixth and seventh grades at the two elementary schools. The tapes which proved to be of potential use include: a) one fifth grade with seven sessions covering a period of eight weeks; b) three sixth grades; one five sessions in length and covering a period of seven weeks; one six sessions long covering a period of eight weeks; and one of five sessions covering a period of seven weeks; and c) one seventh grade with six sessions covering a period of eight weeks. No sequence of tapes is totally complete. In addition, I had the project director's transcriptions and abstracts, some project journals from team members, and interview notes for four of the five teachers of these classes.

The tapes chosen for analysis are the fifth grade from School A, Mr. Powell's class. One of the sixth grades from School B, Mr. Mitchell's class, and the seventh grade from School A, Mr. McKenzie's class. These tapes include classes from both schools and are among the most complete of the sets of tapes. All of the teachers are male, are close to the same age, and have some tenure, both in the schools where they teach and with the grade levels which they teach. Further, these three teachers demonstrated a continuum of participation in the project activities which ranged from no involvement to active participation and preparation.

The Problem

The problem addressed by the anthropological analysis of the video tapes is to pinpoint what variables in the three classroom situations impacted on the conduct of the project and on the achievement of its objectives. Those objectives⁴ included the establishment of patterns of work different from the usual classroom modes. Integral to this was the use of a team approach. The hope was to share leadership in a non-authoritarian manner where adults model behavior, listen and respond to the contributions of the children. Team members hoped to act as small group leader-facilitators. It was hypothesized that small groups would allow for more opportunity for all children to participate, become involved, share ideas, gain confidence, generate more good ideas and permit more leaders to emerge.

Abstract of Project Activities in the Three Classes Fifth Grade

The fifth grade class began with a concentration exercise in which everyone paired off and the pairs took turns changing something about their appearance (out of sight of the partner) which the partner was to discover. The class then separated into two groups. The task was to imagine themselves as scientists from another planet who are seeing a candle for the first time. One person in each group recorded what they described. The team members asked guiding questions.

In the second session the recordings were shared. The team leader asked further questions to clarify the observations.

The task for the third session was to determine the contents of wrapped boxes without opening them. Students were divided into five groups. Each group described each of five boxes and recorded the results.

The fourth session continued this activity. The boxes were opened, the contents recorded and the lists generated compared with the lists from the previous session.

The fifth session was devoted to focus activities: Tag, Magnetic Hands (a mirror action exercise), a Chorus (Happy Birthday was sung in a variety of styles), Word Response Ball Throw Circle (a category was chosen and the person catching the ball had to name something in that category not already named), and Who Started the Motion (one person was chosen to be IT; they left while the circle picked a leader to initiate actions when IT returned; the object was for the group to follow its leader so closely that it was difficult to discern who was initiating the changes in the motions made by the group).

The sixth session also concentrated on focusing activities: Centering (all stood in a circle and concentrated and then progressed to passing movements, looks or imaginary objects around the entire circle without changes) and Who Started the Motion.

The seventh session consisted of structured games: Pass the Object, Who Started the Motion, and Mine Field (the class members were mines who planted themselves in an open space, two others were IT, one was blind--eyes closed--and another was a guide; they had to negotiate

the field without touching any of the mines to reach a goal at the other side).

The eighth session centered on Structured Games: Centering; Pass the Sound; Magnetic Hands; Mirror Action; Random Walk (everyone moved at random, not touching anyone else, to directions from the team leader); Blind Walk (one partner was blind and was lead on the random walk by the other member of the pair); and Catching (small groups of five were formed, one person was in the middle, they leaned backward, forward and to the side and were caught by the other members of the group before they lost their balance.)

The final session was devoted to developing a scene. The students chose the setting--a jungle. The scene was created, then the team members took turns leading groups of students on a harrowing trip through this jungle. The lights were turned off and shades drawn; the students made jungle sounds. The objective was to make the journey real for participants and observers.

The Sixth Grade

The first session was devoted to focusing exercises: Pass the Sound, Centering (all in the circle placed one hand on each neighbor's should, focused on a spot in the center and shifted weight in time with breathing), Pass the Object; and Story-Telling with String (the group had to create a story, the amount each person contributed and how long they talked determined by lengths of string they unwound from a ball of string).

The second session was likewise devoted to focusing and group building activities: Centering; Spectator Sports-people (the group watch an imaginary football game as it is described by a team member); the game was next changed to Batminton, then to jump rope, in which the group took turns jumping the rope, and lastly to a rope twirl where everyone jumped the imaginary rope as it was swung under their feet; Transformation (as a pen was passed around the circle, each person made it into a new imaginary object); and Who Started the Motion.

The third session continued the same themes: Centering; Egg Throw Contest (imaginary eggs were tossed between partners who moved apart until the egg was dropped); Hypothetical Suggestion with a bee smoker (children were asked what they thought it might be and/or do); the Machine (several children combined their actions to become part of a human machine; this required coordinated motions); the class was asked to be ready the next week to say what is the most important thing to them about being an American.

The fourth session also concentrated on structured games: Centering, Pass the Feeling, find the changes in partners' appearance; and Statues (the class divided into small groups, each built a statue with the people in the group that represented one of the major shared ideas the students developed in response to what is important about being an American).

The fifth session began with Centering. The next task was Minors. Then three visitors from European countries (team members who had lived in Europe) were interviewed.

Students divided into three groups to develop appropriate questions and each guest was interviewed before the whole class.

The sixth session was devoted to inquiry activities regarding artifacts from European countries. Students handled and discussed them, shared information and asked questions.

The seventh session was devoted to an improvisational airplane trip to a foreign country. The scenario of the trip was to be the airplane ride itself, the experience of passing through customs and boarding busses to travel to hotels. Team members took on and rehearsed important roles (pilot, stewardess, customs officer, tour guide, etc.) The scenario was not followed. The students, who were to be passive participants, took over the action by hijacking the airplane as it landed. The hijackers were captured by the team leader (as a security guard) and a student who was recruited to be a policeman. The prisoners were removed from the room. All attempts to complete the preplanned scenario failed and the group finally reboarded the plane, sent home by the foreign country because of their unacceptable behavior. The group stopped to discuss what happened with the scene. The team leader found that the teacher had sent the hijackers to the office.

In the eighth session it was decided the class would stick with the problem of the hijacking. The hijackers would be tried. However, the team leader believed the group needed more preparation because the details of the hijacking and arrest were not particularly clear as it happened so

fast many students missed it. The dramatic idiom chosen to help clarify the details was a radio newscast with interviews. A team member, reporter, interviewed the tourguide and pilot. Then the team leader and the student who was drafted to become the policeman described what happened. Next two of the hijackers were interviewed about what occurred and why they acted as they did. Then the customs official was interviewed. Lastly, two other passengers were queried-- the teacher and another student. All participants did a good job of creating a character and staying in it. The students' stories were not necessarily consistent or logical however. Next the work of organizing a trial was undertaken. Needed roles were outlined and volunteers found to fill them. Some problems, such as the need for and unavailability of an impartial jury, were tackled.

The final session was devoted to the trial with testimony from all relevant persons, examination and cross examination by attorneys and with all other customary courtroom roles duly played out. The trial ended, unfinished, with a lunch break as the noon recess bell rang.

The Seventh Grade

The work in this class was centered on the history of the local community. The teacher had done preparatory work with the class and the object of the first session was to have the students acquaint the team with the area and its history. The students were the experts and their teacher led the session asking them about what their fathers do for a living. Next the team asked the class to make a map of the county. Then some of the students shared

old tools, fossils and other objects local in nature.

The second session focused on elaboration of imagination. The students were asked to imagine the scene of the site of the school as it was before European settlement. A similar scene was described in great detail in a narration read by the team, accompanied by background music. Then the students, in pairs, wrote letters back home describing what they had seen.

The third session began with reading the letters written the week before. The class agreed to role play moving into this area to settle it. They talked about where they might travel from, by what means and what they might bring.

The fourth session continued the preparation for the role play in more detail. They agreed to come from England by boat. However, the questions of where they might land and travel from over land took the remainder of the session to resolve.

The fifth session saw the initiation of the role play. They began by making a record of everyone going on the trip. Each student signed a list as who they were in 1833 and how old they were then. The issue of how to obtain rights to the land in this new land was raised and a letter was drafted making a request for land.

The sixth session began with the election of a leader. The next task was to discuss and decide the route and means of travel into the area to be settled. This prolonged discussion began to dissipate the students' attention.

The team leader set up a scene regarding the charter of the boat which would carry them from England to the new world. This could not be begun quickly. So the team leader directed the attention of the class to the problem of preparing to leave their homes in England. How much money could be raised to pay for the charter and for land by selling the land and possessions they currently held? This worked well and got the class back to the task of making the trip as opposed to talking about how to make it.

The seventh session began with a town meeting. The group read aloud lists of the possessions they were bringing on the trip and the amount of money each had. The team leader then sent everyone to the hall. As they re-entered the room, they boarded the ship. A ship of the time was described for them in detail and the students grasped what it was like to cross the ocean at that time.

The eighth session began with a role call of all the journey participants (using 1833 names). Then the team leader, in character as a participant, set up the task of drafting a letter back home to tell those left there that everyone had arrived and what the journey was like. A recorder was designated. They had trouble focusing on specifics. The letter was tied to taking the money to buy the land to the registrar and the group student leader was more interested in addressing that issue than in recounting the trip. The team leader was able to insert one part of the missing history of the journey by explaining what befell one of the team members on the journey. She was absent this day and the narrative also explained her absence.

The next task undertaken was the construction of a building. They attempted to decide what kind of building should be erected first. The student leader insisted that it be a church. This led to a heated and realistic debate which continued for the rest of the session.

The final session took place on a day set aside in the school to mark the rite of passage of graduation for the seventh graders. The class was allowed to be silly and many of the female students had dolls. The girls wanted to incorporate them into the improvisation. Some team members worked with the girls in small groups. The task set by the team was to build a house for the member absent last week who was left behind in the drama to recover from illness. The male students participated by finding building materials but needed too much direction to actually carry out the building task. The group could not concentrate and function as such so the team stopped the drama.

The Hypothesis

Analysis of the video-tape and related materials indicate that four variables had an impact on the project as it unfolded. These variables were manifest in each classroom at each grade level. They are:

- I. The Children's Cognitive and Social Developmental Level;
- II. The Regional Social-Cultural Context;
- III. The Culture of the School as Manifest in the Classroom;
- IV. The Teacher's Role in the Project.

The remainder of this report will describe examples of the functioning of each of the variables and will assess

how the project was affected by them. It is important to note before continuing that the variables are interactive and examples are taken to best demonstrate the impact of the variable under discussion only.

I. Children's Cognitive and Social Developmental Level

The importance of the children's cognitive and social level of development is self-evident. Yet it requires mention both because of its pervasiveness and because dramatic activities are above all social in nature. A knowledge base to draw upon is clearly needed. Equally important are the social competencies required to actualize that knowledge and to participate in drama in a meaningful way. The tasks selected must be appropriate to both. The fifth grade class provides examples of an inappropriate match--The Choir--and an appropriate one--The Jungle.

The team leader asks the class to line up as a choir. This is accomplished without a problem.
TL: "I'd like you to sing Happy Birthday to me like the gospel choir on television, O.K.?"

A boy: "How do you do that?"

TL: "You don't watch that on television?"

Children: "No!"

TL: "What kind of choir does everybody know?"

A child: "Opera." General noises follow.

The team leader holds up her hands for order as a conductor would. Several other types of choirs are offered.

TL: "What did you say J?" (J is a team member)

J: "I heard somebody say opera."

TL: "O.K. The opera chorus. It's my birthday. Everybody sing me Happy Birthday."

The group picks up on the expected parody of trained voices.

TL: "O.K. Now let's try it rock-and-roll style."

They begin with one-two-three, try to get some pep; bounce around a bit with fingers snapping. It was not noticeably different from the usual rendering of Happy Birthday.

TL: "O.K. What will we try?"

A child very clearly: "Country."

TL: "O.K. Country version. Get a drawl into it."

Again it ends up sounding like the traditional Happy Birthday.

TL: "O.K. I'd like you to sing it to me like one of those very proper choirs. Very proper, very polite, very just so."

Again the effort is not distinguishable. They did stand very straight and quiet. Some of the boys watched the adults closely rather than sing.

The next mode suggested is Bluegrass. The team leader moved into the chorus and addresses one boy: "O.K. Bluegrass. You be the conductor."

The Boy: "I can't. I don't even know what Bluegrass is."

The team leader moved him out in front of the group saying: "That's O.K. You be the conductor. We'll make it up, that's O.K. We'll make it up."

It sounded like the country-traditional version with some sour harmony.

The problem here was not that the students were unaware of musical styles, clearly they were familiar with several. What they lacked was the competence to reproduce them. They have not yet reached the point (ages 10 or 11) where they listen closely enough to music to pinpoint the characteristic differences in musical style or to be able to reproduce them in a recognizable manner.

The creation of the jungle was perfectly suited to the level of development of this class.

TL: "What we are going to try to do today, I think, is make a scene in here. A scene (pause). Imagine that this place is now some other kind of a space. What would you like to make it into? What are your ideas?"

A boy: "A jungle."

TL: "Somebody else have an idea?"

A girl: "Animals."

TL: "A place. What?"

Hands^(a): "There in that place where a space shuttle goes off."

TL: "Inside a space shuttle. Yeh, what's your idea?"

Child: "A carnival."

Child: "Inside a movie . . ."

Hands: "Inside a submarine."

The next boy's suggestion was inaudible.

A boy: "A roller skating rink."

A boy: "A ship."

Hands: "A mountain top."

Children: "A volcano." "A dance floor." "A music studio, where you make music." "An island."

Hands has one of his hands raised but the team leader stops soliciting ideas before he is called upon again.

TL: "You only get to pick one."

A team member is asked to count the votes (raised hands).

TL: "Space shuttle, submarine, jungle. Some people are kinda voting more than once here."

Adult: "Vote once."

^(a) This child is a recognizable character in the classroom. Where it is possible, such children will be identified. This boy had a great deal of trouble keeping his hands to himself, hence the name.

TL: "Roller rink, Mt. St. Helens, carnival, dance studio. O.K. What are our leading contenders?"

Adult: "Jungle and submarine."

TL: "Now think about it for a minute."

Students begin to call out jungle or submarine.

TL: "You think a minute and we'll vote but this time let's make it that we only vote once."

When they vote jungle is said first and wins by a clear majority of hands.

The task shifted to creating the specifics of the jungle. The class suggested that trees, animals, quicksand, gorillas, rocks and grass, bushes and vines were needed.

TL: "Let's decide where the swampy place will be first. How will we know where? Will you walk around the swampy place? Quickly so we can see where it is."

A boy does this and the class watches. Next they are asked to outline the quicksand. One boy wants it in a corner next to the swamp.

TL: "We'd better put the quicksand in another part of the room."

A girl is appointed to designate its location. She walks around a very big area at first.

An adult: "That's a lot of quicksand."

She is asked to walk it again and the size shrinks. Several boys play at being in it. One of the small boys flies over it like a bird.

It is a problem to keep the children out of it long enough to get it marked.

TL: "Who expressed an interest in building trees?"

A team member, P, and a boy are appointed and are told they can use chairs. They pile up three chairs. Another boy is appointed to build another tree. He gets a whole pile of chairs. He and another boy pile up five chairs in an unsteady fashion. Two boys take mock kicks at the first tree. The second tree is too unsteady and is rebuilt.

TL: "I think there needs to be a place where you can get fresh water."

A boy (loudly, twice): "Back there, in that corner."

Another boy in the middle of the room bends over and indicates a line down through the room which bisects the two halves of room which have the swamp and the quicksand respectively. This becomes the river. A child says something about alligators.

The remainder of the drama consisted of small groups of three to five persons--one team member in each--making a journey through the jungle. The first journeys were rather flat. However, the children watched the groups and remembered dramatic elaborations which each successive group copied and added to. The team leader changed the game to make it more dramatic and to give the last groups challenging problems--a trip at night, a trip with heavy packs and the last group had to make the trip carrying a canoe.

The team leader asked for suggestions for the last group.

A boy: "Thunder and lightening and rain."

A boy: "Rowing in the river."

A boy: "A tornado." This is rejected.

A boy: "Trees."

A boy from the last group: "Are we carrying anything?"

The team leader repeats the question for the class.

Children: "Yes."

TL: "You're carrying a canoe."

Hands is in this group. He began to roll his pants legs up when rain was mentioned. He is ready now.

TL: "Can four people ride in a jungle canoe?"

A child: "Yes."

A boy: "Can I be a tree?"

TL (motioning him into place): "Yes."

Boy: "I'm gonna be a tree."

The class begins to make jungle noises. The group really plays carrying the canoe. The trees lay down and the team member, P, falls over one. Two boys pull her up. Another boy nearly falls in the quicksand and is pulled up. They row down the river and all end up swimming in it. They played it big and well.

The group members were able to discuss how they felt after the trip. Other children were able to discuss what they observed as well.

TL: "Can you see the jungle we have made?"

Class: "Yes."

TL: "Did you believe when we started we could make a jungle?"

A boy: "Yes."

TL: "I thought you could but I wasn't absolutely sure."

The directed fantasy described above was very successful. It fit both the cognitive and social developmental levels of the children. They had the knowledge needed to create the scene with some adult direction. They also had the behavioral competencies to play it out. Non-verbal fantasy action was possible but a role play that called for taking on the social role of another whose characteristics were already defined, and should be recognizable in the dramatic action, was not possible.

The sixth graders showed the ability to blend role play and imagination. They were not yet ready to use themselves to play out a scenario set in advance but they were able to develop characters in dramatic contexts that were familiar to them (primarily through exposure by television). This can be seen in the hijacking of the airplane.

The plane trip was a problem from the outset despite the fact it had been rehearsed beforehand by the team members who took the key roles of pilot, stewardess, tourguide and customs officer. The pilot and stewardess were at cross purposes and gave conflicting information about the length of the flight. The pilot was forced to explain this discrepancy; the

explanation was long and complicated, prolonging the time the children were expected to sit quietly, listening in their seats. The stewardess could not locate their destination, Luxemburg, on the map for the class. She attempted an accent; it worked poorly and made the students giggly. The pilot gave the group a lengthy explanation of the plane's landing protocol. All of this led the students to be restless and skeptical about what interest the remainder of the plane trip might hold.

Two boys--J.R.^b and Jack--from back by the side blackboard, are sneaking up between the two long rows of seats facing the front blackboard. They have guns (one looks like a toy gun not just fingers). They aim at the team leader.

TL: "We have a hold-up."

Bo has come up from behind and Luke^c joins in from the front.

Luke: "We're a team."

Jack: "Your money or your life."

J.R. is standing there getting giggly. Bo has moved to the side. Luke is standing on his chair.

J.R.: "Strip."

He gets giggly again, and looks at his classmates. The team leader used this moment of inattention to apprehend him.

J.R.: "Help! Rape!"

TL: "I've got him."

Pilot: "The situation is now under control. Please return to your seats. (The three unguarded hijackers do sit down.) The situation is under control. Repeat. The Luxemburg police have apprehended the robbers."

The students want to jump up and Luke does. He returns to hold a gun on the team leader and J.R. The pilot continues to tell them to return to their seats so they can deplane and go through customs.

^bHe took this name himself.

^cDukes of Hazzard is a favorite TV program of children in the area. It seemed appropriate to borrow the names of its protagonists for these two boys.

TL: "Pilot, pilot, we are going to have to remove the prisoner before we take anybody else off the plane. It's not safe."

Jack and Bo move forward toward the team leader at this time. Bo then falls back. Jack offers himself as a prisoner with his hands held as if tied behind his back. Despite the team leader's command, the pilot is ignoring the prisoners and pushing on with the rehearsed scenario about luggage and customs. Luke is still in front with his gun on the team leader and J.R.

TL: "This officer will take charge of the prisoner."

Luke: "I thought I was a hijacker."

TL: "No, you didn't play the role . . ."

Bo joins Jack and the team leader in front. The other team members have gone on with the rehearsed scenario as if the hijacking had never happened.

TL (to the pilot): "Before we take the passengers off we simply have to get these prisoners into custody. Captain, will you open the hatch there?"

Luke: "I'm going to kill somebody here. Jack, please come with me, J.R. . . ."

The prisoners are moved to the classroom door.

TL: "Freeze." Do you want to continue? Shall we say the prisoners are taken care of?"

Hijackers: "Yes!"

TL: "Do you want to find out what happens to the passengers or do you want to go ahead being prisoners. You can decide."

All opt for the hijacker/prisoner role even though they must stay in the hall.

The scenario continued as rehearsed. When the problem of communicating through an interpreter with someone who does not speak your language was played out over the problem of lost luggage, the class lost interest, and a second hijacking attempt was made. However, this time it was ignored by everyone on the team including the team leader. The children were disappointed this ploy did not work a second time and wanted to negotiate the point. The attempt to carry through a variation of the planned scenario failed as the students refused to participate. The scenario was concluded by evicting the group from the country.

The discussion which followed the scene brought out some important information which helped to explain the students' actions in attempting to take over the scene. They commented that the hijacking was the high point of the session. They were aware of being kicked out of Luxemburg for their misbehavior. It was the only other point mentioned. Otherwise, they were not attending very closely. This was partially due to insufficient provision for including the students actively in the preplanned scenario. However, it was also due to a lack of relevant social knowledge on the part of the children. They commented they had never been on a plane and some had not traveled outside the local area. They did not have enough knowledge from experience to follow the scenario prepared for them. They solved this problem by converting the scene into one they did have the information to play out actively--a scene of robbers, hijackers and policemen. Most of the knowledge base they drew upon to create this drama most likely came from television, not just from dramatic programs but also from the news.

The children demonstrated the ability to maintain and elaborate upon these characterizations over time. This is shown in the interviews done the next week.

The team members have interviewed one another for a radio broadcast. When Luke is called upon as the security officer, he walks to the front of the room and sits facing the class. There are some giggles from the other children. He is asked if he felt his life was in danger.

Luke: "Nah."

Some more giggles from the class. He is asked by the reporter if he has had any prior experience with hijacking.

Luke: "Well, once." More giggles because he is imitating the poor accent the team member stewardess used earlier.

Reporter: "Was it similar to this one?"

Luke: "Yes."

TL: "Tell us what happened."

Luke: "Well, these people came at me with guns and they wanted to go this other place and I said no." The class is laughing.

Reporter: "What place did they want?"

Luke: "They wanted to go to Iran." More giggles.

Reporter: "Did they specify what organization they were from or the reasons why--Was it for money?"

Luke: "They were the KKK."

Reporter: "What's that?"

Luke: "The Ku Klux Klan." There are giggles throughout this.

Reporter: "What do you think about the penalty from the Luxemburg police side?"

Luke: "Well, they get at least ten to twenty years. And those gunmen--when they started to shoot, they got the leader (more giggles) so then when I came on, they quit, they just gave up."

Reporter: "Do you think they'll be deported considering that it is America and the problems of two different countries? What has the Luxemburg police decided? What will be - - -"

Luke: "Well they said that they were going to do it in Luxemburg, but President Reagan said if he had them back on his farm he would tar and feather them." Lots of giggles.

Reporter: "So you haven't got any static from the American officials at all?"

Luke: "Nope."

Reporter: "That looks really good. Could we speak to the hijackers?"

Student: "One is absent."

The other two take chairs in front of the "camera".

Reporter: "How do you feel--first let me get your names."

J.R.: "J.R."

Bo: "I won't tell it."

Reporter: "I respect your rights. Now this hijacking. Was it for money or was it political?"

J.R.: "Money."

Reporter: "For the money. But we heard from earlier statements that there was no money involved."

Bo: "We was broke."

Reporter: "Why did you give up so easily?"

J.R.: "We only got \$500."

Reporter: "The idea of holding them for ransome never occurred to you?"

J.R.: "No."

Reporter: "I've had reports on crime . . . How did you plan this?"

Bo: "I was in the crowd and he came up and asked me to hijack it, and then he said he'd give me 'bout \$5000. But he didn't pay me."

Reporter: "J.R. is the ringleader then?"

Bo: "You could say that."

Reporter: "If you were just in the crowd, why did you consent? Didn't you know hijacking is a serious offense?"

Bo: "He had a gun on me! He scared me! So I had to obey or he'd shot me, he said."

Reporter: "J.R., isn't it dangerous to just go into a crowd and ask people to hijack with you? You get results that way?"

J.R.: "No. If they said no, I shoot 'em." He shakes his head no throughout his response.

Reporter: "Is that the way usually--How did you?"

J.R.: "You see me and my buddy that isn't here today, we decided to split the money half and half and then he said this (nods to Bo) was his good buddy - - "

Bo: "I refused!"

J.R.: "So him and his buddy went down and got the machineguns and come back and we got on the plane and it didn't work."

Bo: "He's lyin'!" Lots of giggles.

Reporter: "He just said you picked him up on the street - - "

Bo: "He paid! He was gonna shoot me or whatever."

Reporter: "On the plane?"

Bo: Yes!"

Reporter: "I'm getting conflicting reports. They don't fit together."

Bo: "He's lyin'!"

Reporter: "What I don't understand is--Usually when they kidnap a plane, there's a ransom for it. Why did you just go with \$500 and then just give up the plane?"

J.R.: "There was an airforce outside."

Reporter to Bo: "An airforce. Did you see the airforce?"

Bo: "No. Only thing I saw was guns."

Reporter: "How many guns?"

J.R.: "100."

Bo: "I can't count that high."

Reporter to J.R.: "Did you see any guns? What did you see?"

J.R.: "Oh, yes, guns." Puts his finger to his head like a pistol.

Reporter: "How could you see on the plane? You realized what you did was wrong."

Both: "Yeah." More giggles from the class.

Reporter: "At the trial would you confess? Would you turn against your buddy?"

Bo: "Well - - "

Reporter: "Do you know the penalty for Lux--"

Bo: "Nope."

Reporter: "Well it's ten to twenty years."

Bo: "I'll turn against him."

Reporter to J.R.: "How do you feel?"

J.R.: "I'll kill him."

The seventh grade students were well able to role play. They had no trouble putting themselves in the places of settlers of 150 years earlier. They showed the ability to take roles, plan, organize and play out various aspects of the journey to their new world homes. This is shown very clearly in the debate they had regarding what kind of a building the group should build first, having reached the site of their settlement.

Team Member: "If we're going to build a building, I'd like to know what kind of building we're going to build for ourselves."

Someone suggests a large building with a frame and roof so there is protection from the rain until the sides are put on. The team leader asks for other suggestions.

The Boss^d: "The first building we ought to make is a church."

Student: "A what?"

The Boss: "A church."

TL: "Do you want to listen to anyone else's ideas or have you just made up your mind for everybody?"

A student speaks but it can't be heard on the tape. Billy Jo gestures explaining something to another of the boys. A girl who has had her hand raised speaks but can't be heard on the tape. The discussion about the church is getting animated and noisy.

Student: "How're you going to sleep in a church?"

Student: "We'll all stay in the church."

^dThe elected leader of the group. He tended to be authoritarian.

Adam: "I think we should build one shelter and stay there until we get . . . , or a huge church. That way everybody'd have a place to stay while we build our houses."

Larry: "I think we should build our house first."

Student: "No."

Larry: "We should have places to live before we start building churches."

There is an undertone of individual discussion and debate going on throughout this whole sequence. Jesse is called on by the Boss.

Jesse: "I agree about the church. Well I partly agree. If you put those people in a church, you're not gonna have enough room to put all the things you want in a church like benches and stuff like that."

Student: "Build the church."

Student: "Well we get our homes made, it's going to go hardly any way you can get . . ."

The debate is animated.

TL: "Mr. Chairman I want to protest. When we started out you said everybody in this group was going to have a say so and there're some people here who have things to say who haven't been heard. I'm upset about that."

The Boss: "I have a word to say. What I'm trying to say is before we get into benches or anything like that we're going to have a church."

The class starts to laugh and protest. They are upset with him.

A student: "Mr. Chairman, whyn't we have a vote?"

A student: "Yes. Everybody vote on a church."

TL: "I object. I object. You said before we started out on this journey that everybody was going to have a chance to have their ideas heard; and now you're not willing to listen to anybody."

The class chimes in with similar accusations.

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Johnny is called on to speak. He can't hear that he's been recognized to speak. The boy next to him tells him to speak-up.

Johnny: "Oh. We ought to build a big building where we could sleep, everybody (giggles from the class), and then build houses."

The Neighbor: "Why don't we just . . . until we get figured out what we're gonna do."

He continues that they should build a stockade. He illustrates what he means with his hands as he talks.

The Neighbor: "A thing with fences so we can all stay alive long enough to build a church. We should build a fence, then build a big, oh it's like two buildings within one, you know." He points to someone and smiles as repeats you know.

Billy Jo announced that the first thing they would build in those days was a town hall and the church would be the last thing. He is emphatic about this. He thinks they should build something to live in. There is loud debate. Someone whistles to get quiet.

Student: "Quiet. I can't hear you."

Team Member: "The decision you make affects all our lives and I want to know everybody agrees before we do something."

There is applause, cheers, whistles and comments of agreement.

The Boss: "Why do we think everything has to be voted on? We have to do some things for ourselves."

He received a noisy, negative reaction. There is more debate and whistles for quiet. The team leader cuts off the debate at this point.

The team leader's transcription indicates the students continued the debate for the rest of this day and into the next day as well. It would be highly unlikely that adults could have produced a better role play given the same problem. These children clearly commanded the social competencies required to play out this kind of a scene.

They had mastered a typical regional adult style of debate which was applied to a highly emotionally-charged issue, the importance of churches in the community.

II. The Regional Social-Cultural Context

The aspect of the regional and working class culture which was most apparent in the three classes was traditional definition of sex roles; i.e., male dominance and female passivity. In each grade level the children who dominated the activities in the classroom, who took stage and had to be noticed, and who contributed the most were the boys. This became more marked the older the children were. Such a monopoly of collective attention by boys was not the case in the inner city where the author did fieldwork. The class stars (social) and troublemakers were as likely to be female as male in that setting. The fact that pre-adolescent boys are generally allowed and expected to be more active and aggressive in our society explains some of this dominance. Also important in the case of the older children is the on-set of female adolescence, shy embarrassment and its accompanying reluctance to make social mistakes. It should further be noted that the male students outnumbered the females in the fifth and sixth grades. Yet, in situations where things were made more or less equal by the project team, the boys still took charge and the girls let them.

A glance back to review the jungle sequence from the fifth grade will show that the majority of the suggestions for possible scenes came from boys. The choice was narrowed

down to two selections of primarily interest to the boys-- submarine and jungle. The boys made the major contributions to defining that scene as well. They defined the swamp, built the trees and designated the river.

The tendency for the boys to dominate in this class became apparent fairly early. It could be seen in the conduct of the ball throw game in the third session. All of the categories suggested for use in the game came from either team members or male students. In the conduct of the game itself, the boys threw the ball only to other boys or to team members. Girls were included only when a team member threw the ball to a female. She would then throw it to another girl or (more frequently than the boys) back to a team member.

In the sixth grade the boys' dominance and girls' acceptance of it was established in the second session. In Spectator Sportspeople, the first game to be imagined was football. The game was therefore skewed in the boys' favor to begin with. However, they maintained control throughout, even in the rope jump--certainly a girls' game for children of this age. The children were asked to stand as if they were on two sides of a football field. The class split predominantly males on one side of the "field" and females on the other. It was almost possible to see the girls tune-out the sportscaster. They were asked to follow the "ball" with their eyes and clearly did not. The boys may have been better able to do this, but their tendency was to watch the male team member who was the sportscaster instead. The game was changed at the team

leader's suggestion. The new choice, batminton was offered by a boy.

The next game, jump rope, was suggested by the team leader. The team members began by turning the imaginary rope and jumping. After this demonstration the class was invited to participate. They were asked to form a line. It was formed by boys on the side of the room where most of the male students stood for the ball game. The first students to jump were two of the future hijackers--Jack and Bo. When they missed in jumping and stepped on the "rope", they had to turn it. This appeared to be the more prized activity. Once Bo lost his place as a turner, he got back in the front of the line to jump and thus eventually became a turner again. When he did turn for the second time, he insisted on spinning it in the opposite direction from that which had been used--the rotation he chose made it harder to get in to begin to jump. He refused to change the direction when it was questioned by others. It was resolved by a boy who jumped in anyway. He was asked if he wanted to jump faster and said he did. They turned the "rope" even faster until the activity became silly. All four of the future key students in the hijacking (three hijackers and the policeman) were involved in this activity.

It was interesting to note that once the line for jumping was established on the boys' side of the open space it was understood that only boys would participate. The girls watched and smiled. When one of the team members

crossed from the girls' side of the space to the boys' side in order to get in line, no girls followed her. Yet it would seem at least one girl had experienced jumping rope because she began to chant a rhyming song used in jumping rope when the team members first modeled the game to the class.

In the seventh grade, the boys dominated from the outset. They were very adult in their mannerisms and style of speech. They did not appear to suffer from the paralyzing shyness that affected the girls. The boys were much surer of themselves. They had no trouble describing locally obtained items of historical value while the few girls who contributed to this activity during the initial session said as little as possible (lots of head nodding, shaking and monosyllables).

The confidence of the male students can be seen in the church debate. In addition, their dominance can be seen in the fourth session. The excerpt is taken from late in the class period but is representative of the whole session. They were trying to decide where in the new land to journey from to reach their current community.

The Boss: "I got Bloomington, Indiana, here." (Reading from a book) "Settlers arrived in 1815. "So that would be a good place."

Student: "When?"

The Boss: "1815."

Student: "1815."

The Boss: "1815."

TL: "So you think some of them got dissatisfied already (by 1833) and want to come back?"

The Boss: "Yah! We could come from Bloomington, Illinois too. That was founded in 1831."

TL: "If they were leaving Bloomington, Illinois, already they sure were dissatisfied in a hurry, I'll bet."

Jess: "Yah! Well that was because of slavery and people gettin' hung and . . ."

TL: "I see."

The Boss: "Oh, we ah, we couldn't a come from Frankfort (Kentucky). It wasn't there yet."

TL: "Well, how many have we got there?"

A Boy (at the blackboard): "Seven."

TL: "What about Pittsburgh?"

Student: "Could we have come from there?" (low noise)

A Boy: "I'll bet we coulda."

Another boy: "I thought that was a little later."

A couple of other boys are looking up things in their texts.

TL: "Nobody knows about Pittsburgh?"

One boy finds it, raises his hand and says yah and starts to read.

TL: "I'm not sure everybody can hear you. Don't start telling us about Pittsburgh until you are sure everybody is listening."

It quiets. He skims the text non-verbally.

His Neighbor: "It was a town in 1764."

The Reader: "Yes."

His Neighbor: "And it was a fort in 1754, so I imagine you could come from there. It was a city in 1860, so we could come from there easy."

The children in general probably all had the kinds of resource using and information gathering skills displayed

here. However, the boys used them in this context; the girls did not. In part the girls were undercut by their own adaptation to classroom discussion where hands are raised to be recognized by the teacher as the only acceptable method of participation. The girls tended to raise their hands and wait silently to be recognized. Many of the boys also raised their hands but would shout out their contribution at the same time, not waiting to be recognized. This style of discussion in which the boys were much more adept than the girls, was better suited to the context described above than that practiced by the female students. It also came closer to approximating group problem solving debate type interaction. The boys' style of response was much better adapted to the tasks set out by the improvisational drama team than was the girls'. The boys style also more closely approximated adult same sex referenced verbal behavior than did the girls, although adult females would be much less likely than males to participate in this type of a debate in any event.

III. The Culture of the School

Customary ways of doing things in the public elementary school and in these schools in particular played an important role in the improvisational drama sessions. The school has a whole "hidden curriculum" that is designed to teach children the importance, among many other things, of living by the clock (class periods, bells, not being late for class, etc.), of working under supervision by somebody else's rules (classroom management, methods of control,

sanctions for failure to comply, the classroom structure which puts one or two adults against twenty or more children), and of competition (controlled turn-taking, rewards for individual achievement, teacher's time as a scarce commodity which must be taken or won in some way), and so on. School is very much children's work. It is also their preparation for the constraints imposed by adult jobs in a complex society.

Another part of the culture of school is the creation of a peer social system in the school and the children's participation in it. As in any group activity (by adults or children) this underlying sociality will have an impact. Teachers are almost always aware of this aspect of their class members' behavior; however, the degree to which it affects academic activities frequently goes unrecognized.

The importance of the hidden curriculum and the project team's inability to transcend it can be seen in the fourth session with the fifth grade class. In the preceding session children had been asked to divide into groups and record contents of boxes as exactly as possible as they were passed among the groups. The team leader's transcription indicates this original goal was transformed by the children to one of their group completing the task more quickly than the members of the other four groups finished it. In the fourth session the results of each group's recording was to be compared with the actual contents of the five boxes.

TL: "Now the question is this morning, I want to find out if we can get organized in the groups we were in the other day and find out what's in the boxes. We have exactly 35 minutes to finish this assignment and if we don't finish it by lunchtime, that means we will never find out because it will be too late. O.K.? The boxes can't come again. (Silence.) Alright? (Silence.) Got that? (Some yesses.) What I want to know is . . . we're using up our 35 minutes here. The clock is still running even though we're not working. Um, um, where is M (female team member)?"

Two Girls: "She left."

The team leader asks if M had the lists of things they wrote down the other day. Someone (a team member) suggests she went to get them. The team has suffered a critical breakdown in communication. The task has been set and the importance of completing it in a specified time period emphasized. The children are primed to do it and are literally on the edges of their chairs, waiting to be signalled to move into their groups. Now, because the team isn't ready, they are denied this. (If they had been allowed to move and then have the issue of the lists resolved the rest of the session might have gone more smoothly.) The team placed itself in a position of vulnerability by not being organized and maintaining control. They also put the children in a no-win position against which the latter rebelled. None of this was, of course, intentional. Yet it happened.

TL: "M typed up all the things you wrote down the other day. Hold it . . . ! Alright . . . ! Everybody hold tight for just a minute until we get the lists."

The team leader confers with other team members. There is more noise.

TL: "Hold it!"

There is more consultation among the team and more noise and movement by the children. The team leader asks M for the rest of the lists.

M: "I don't think they were run off."

Team members are pacing and questioning one another as to who has the lists. The children are still expected to remain sitting. The lists are finally produced and the children attend to the team member who has them.

TL: "Listen, I'm going to tell you what to do now. Are you listening?"

Some children are wandering the room. One boy socks another.

TL: "When I say you can go, I want you to go very quietly into the same groups that you were in on Monday. Wait a minute! And I want you to get settled down and absolutely quiet. Wait a minute! Huh? Yeh, but take it real quiet. Wait a minute til I say! Wait a minute! Who's got a watch with a sweep second hand?"

Two boys and one girl volunteer. One boy brings his watch to the team leader who takes it.

TL: "Alright! Go!

They move into four groups. There is much talking. Only one group, all girls, was ready quickly.

TL: "I'm sorry to say that was 55 seconds. Let's do it again and see if we can make a better record."

They return to their seats. There is pushing and shoving among the boys.

TL: "Are we ready to start over again? (Yesses) You know that was very interesting because it only took us 20 seconds to get back to start over again and it took 55 seconds to do it the first time. (A child says something.) Well, let's do it over again and find out."

The task of timing how long each activity took, announcing it to the class and discussing whether the timing was good or bad was utilized throughout the remainder of the session as a means of control. The importance of time and its nature as a commodity became at one point an ultimate kind of sanction invoked to see that the task set-out, of comparing the children's lists with the actual contents of the boxes, was accomplished.

TL: "One thing I've discovered is it doesn't matter if we come late because when we stay for 45 minutes we only get 10 minutes worth of work done. We might as well just come for 10 minutes next time. What do you say J (team member)? Yah, we'll do that next time. We'll just come for 10 minutes next time. O.K? (Yes and Nos.) That's probably better because then maybe you can do some other things that are good when we're not here. Cause I've found out now that all the time you can work in 35 minutes is about 10 minutes.

So that's all we'll have next time. O.K.? Then if we find out we can work for 15 minutes, we'll work for 15 minutes. But there's no use, you know, wasting a lot of time when 10 minutes is all you can work. (Silence.) I'm not even sure we should try to finish what we are doing today. (Some small protest.) If you don't want to hear, it's not me you're listening to, it's one another, and if you don't want to hear what each other found in the boxes, why we probably should quit right now. You probably don't care to know what was in the boxes? Right? (Nos.) You want to know what was in the boxes? (Yesses.) Well there is only one way to find out isn't there?"

This trick allowed the task to be completed, in part because the class internalized the team leader's role and became self-managing. If it got noisy, they shushed one another. Also, the team leader instructed the children reading the lists not to begin until everyone else was listening.

It would be easy to say that the team fell into the trap of being the teacher. However, this is only partially what actually occurred. Task accomplishment within a specified period of time did become primary, but the children contributed to the scenario by placing the expectation on the team leader that she control their behavior. The team leader's problem was to find some way to make the children take some responsibility for their own behavior. Threatened removal of the team activity did this (the fifth session was cut in length as a result). The children were as concerned with time as the adults. Further, they attempted to turn the activity into a competition against the intent of the drama team. This demonstrates why the culture of the school could not be transcended. It is shared by the children as well as the adults. Children are in school to learn it as much as anything academic and they do. They are not

necessarily willing to suspend the rules and abandon it even if the teacher or other adults are willing to do so.

The sixth and seventh grades each provided a clear example of the culture of the school's impact on project activities. The sixth grade teacher sent the three hijackers to the principal's office. There is no direct information on the tapes about his motivations; however, it can be hypothesized that in his perception the team should have been allowed to carry out their preplanned scenario, that this was the legitimate dramatic activity not the drama of the hijacking. The ultimate penalty for troublemaking was applied, discipline by the school's chief officer. This probably would not have happened if they had not been removed from the room by the team leader. The teacher went to the hall to watch them. There may have been further trouble amongst them there which led to the office trip, or the teacher may have wanted to return to the classroom, been unwilling to ask another team member to relieve him as guard, and simply "stored" them in the principal's office where they would be watched.

The team leader was unprepared for this outcome. She was upset and felt guilty. She had had no intention of having the boys formally disciplined for their spontaneous contribution to the drama.

The seventh grade produced "Weird Day", the final of the seventh grade sessions. The seventh graders were graduating and this Day marked that rite of passage.

They were growing up, leaving the child's world of elementary school and moving into the adolescent-young adult world of junior high school. This was symbolized by the girls and their baby dolls. This event undercut the objectives of the drama team in two ways: (1) there was mutual consensus among the students and their teacher that this would be a day off, no real work would be done; (2) the usual power and leadership structure of the class was reversed. Girls were dominant on Weird day. This was probably because the transition being symbolized was to a status, adulthood, where the roles females are expected to play are ones the girls already have practiced. Male roles are known about by the boys but few have had the opportunity to work for pay, etc. With its usual leadership patterns turned inside-out the class could not function in a role play.

The impact of the students' peer social system has been discussed already in the leadership patterns of the sixth and seventh grades. In the sixth grade the leaders were self-appointed; and they tended to challenge the leadership of the adults and the teacher. In the seventh grade, the adult value system seemed to have been internalized and academic achievement, social popularity and class leadership tended to come together in the persons of the dominant participants in the role plays.

The students' social system also had an impact when children who were unable to cope with one another constructively were forced together by unknowing adults. In the fifth grade, its dynamics could be seen in the relationship between

Hands and a girl with whom he was intrigued. It was not clear if he was intrigued because he was attracted to her or because he was repelled by her in some way. He was at her, annoying her on purpose in some way, every opportunity he had. While much of it went on privately, it occasionally had to be managed by an adult. This changed the focus of activity from the drama team's activity to managing this boy-girl relationship. This occurred in the first session.

Hands and his neighbor have both burned hairs in the candle flame. They tease Barbie with the burned hairs. She turns in the direction of the teacher's desk. She calls out something and motions toward the boys. Hands sits down.

Hands yawns, looks at something on the floor beside his chair and puts his hand on the back of Barbie's chair (next to his) as he does so. He keeps it there until she notices and gives him a dirty look.

It seems likely the class teacher was accustomed to managing this interaction. The team members, however, had no way of knowing about it at this early stage, hence the interruption by Barbie.

In the sixth and seventh grades the problem posed for the team by the children's peer structure was that of the class reject. In the sixth grade it was a boy who consistently wore a cowboy hat (the teacher had a supply of hats they were free to wear at any time). In the exercises which required partners, he was never chosen and the problem of pairing him with someone (usually a team member or the teacher) had to be resolved each time pairing was required before the activity could continue.

In the seventh grade a boy was rejected by Billy Jo before the whole class. Billy Jo was designated in the role play to go find out how much it would cost to charter a ship. Lester volunteered to go with him. Billy Jo remained seated while Lester came up and leaned over Billy Jo's shoulder. Billy Jo got up and called for the team leader's attention. He asked for another partner and said, I never asked for Lester and I don't want Lester. As they both moved to the front Billy Jo looked sullen. The team leader had attempted to ignore all this. When the team leader was ready to start the role play she asked Billy Jo where the person who is going with him was. He ignored Lester and pointed to someone else. The situation was salvaged for both Billy Jo and Lester when someone suggested all three go to the Charter Company office. This role play came close to faltering because of this issue.

IV. The Teacher's Role

The degree and nature of the teacher's participation in the improvisational drama activities also had an impact on the achievement of project goals. The three teachers represented a range of involvement beyond the pre-activity joint planning done by the team leader with all of the teachers. The effects of the teachers' behaviors are relatively easy to identify.

Mr. Powell, the fifth grade teacher, did not participate, actively or passively, unless he was forced to by a child,

such as Barbie, or a team member (this only occurred once.) He usually remained in the room at his desk working on papers. His behavior seemed to have puzzled the children. There are several instances in the taped material where boys in the class played their activities to him. He did not acknowledge any of these instances. The boys acted as if they did not believe he would ignore them and as if they were trying to get a reaction from him, to draw him into the activity. It can be speculated that the almost constant struggle to keep this class under control experienced by the team was related to the teacher's behavior. The children may have wanted him to legitimate the activities by participating.

The sixth grade teacher, Mr. Mitchel, did participate. His style was like that of a team member. He participated in all the exercises, the rope jump, the imaginary egg toss, the plane trip activities, was interviewed as a passenger on the hijacked plane, etc. In so doing he was consistent with what team members' journal notes say about his style of interacting with the students. This was relatively collegial and marked with affect. The children liked him; but his tendency to give them a great deal of freedom probably bothered them. It did not fit the way a teacher is supposed to be; and they did not know how to interpret it. The aggressive boys reacted by challenging his authority. J.R. even took Mitchel as a last name during the trial in the final session. They carried this style of interaction over

into the improvisational drama activities and this caused the project team a certain amount of grief (the hijack, etc.).

The seventh grade teacher, Mr. McKenzie, came very close to directing much of the drama activities in his class from behind the scenes. The team leader's transcriptions indicate that the theme of local history chosen for this class was a particular favorite of the teacher. He set the children's assignment for the first session and led it. He continued to act as a resource person when specific information was needed for the conduct of the sessions. He also continued to maintain a more traditional kind of control over the class as well. There are instances on the tapes of Mr. McKenzie calling out the names of children who are not attending or participating in the team activities. He shared the leadership of the activities in his classroom with the project team but he did not surrender that leadership. His active participation in the project in a manner that made sense to his students certainly helps to explain the success of the project with this class.

Conclusions

All four of these key variables will be present in any public school setting in which an improvisational drama project might be attempted, and they will have an effect on the course of that project. Two of the variables would appear to be givens which would have to be taken into account in project planning. These are the childrens' Cognitive

and Social Developmental Level and the Culture of the School. They cannot be changed; but, they will undermine the project if they are ignored. The other two variables can be worked with to improve project success. The Regional-Social Context can be used as a source of raw material for project activities. Children will be more comfortable and responsive with familiar ideas and concepts. This will facilitate participation in project activities. The Role of the Teacher is clearly critical. Without meaningful teacher participation, a project is unlikely to accomplish a great deal.

Would training in improvisational drama techniques be of use to teachers? It would so long as expectations about what could be accomplished through such training remain realistic. For example, few teachers could substantially improve their ability to perform through such training. However, most teachers could gain a fair amount of insight into the theatrical nature of good teaching; i.e., performance for an audience whose attention must be held by the performer. It could not teach the kind of quick thinking required to sustain a drama or a role play, or to redirect it if it gets off track. (The team leader was particularly adept at this.) But, it could teach the kinds of observation and analysis skills needed to understand when an activity is faltering and why. Teachers could learn to set up and use role plays and improvisations for the same kinds of purposes counselors and group workers use them. They are useful as a projective tool for understanding group

dynamics. Teachers could use them to learn about children's levels of social competence and about the social organization of the children in their classrooms. They can also be used to arrive at and model solutions to some of the problems of group living in the classroom. The use of such techniques in teacher training is certainly deserving of further examination.

REFERENCES

1. This will be an abstract of relevant literature.
2. Key classroom ethnographics will be listed.
3. T. St. Lawrence, "Kids Culture in an Urban School: The Role of Culture Conflict in the Maintenance of Social Inequality," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1977.
4. These were taken from the report written for the granting foundation.

References

1. There are several readers/texts which provide an introduction to the field of educational anthropology. George Spindler has edited several. They include: Education and Culture: Anthropological Approaches (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1963); and Education and Cultural Process: Toward an Anthropology of Education (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1974). Spindler is also the editor of the Case Studies in Education and Culture series for Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. which are introductory ethnographies in the educational anthropology. Murry L. Wax, Stanley Diamond and Fred O. Bearing, Eds., Anthropological Perspectives on Education (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1971); and Solon T. Kimball and Jacquetta H. Burnett, Eds., Learning and Culture. Proceedings of the 1972 Annual Spring Meeting of the American Ethnological Society (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press, 1973) are two other introductory readers. The Education section in Thomas Weaver, Ed., To See Ourselves: Anthropology and Modern Social Issues (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1973) also provides good introductory material. One of the earliest writings of an anthropological nature regarding schooling is Willard Waller, The Sociology of Teaching (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1932), It remains relevant today. Most of the literature prior to 1975 in the field is included in Jacquetta H. Burnett, Anthropology and Education: An Annotated Bibliographic Guide (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press for the Council on Anthropology and Education, 1974). There is a journal devoted to educational anthropology as well. It is Anthropology and Education Quarterly (originally Council on Anthropology and Education Quarterly). It has been published since 1970 under the

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2. There are many excellent classroom ethnographies. Among the best are Philip A. Cusick, Inside Highschool: The Students' World (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1973); Phillip W. Jackson, Life in Classrooms (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1968); Joan Roberts, Scene of the Battle: Group Behavior in Urban Classrooms (Anchor Books, Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1971); Murry L. Wax, Rosalie Wax and Robert V. Dumont, Jr., "Formal Education in an American Indian Community," Social Problems, 2, No. 4, (Spring, 1974); and the classroom specific material in Jules Henry, Culture Against Man (Vintage Books, New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1961).
3. Theodora St. Lawrence, "Kids Culture in an Urban School: The Role of Culture Conflict in the Maintenance of Social Inequality" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1977).